

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE      September 23, 2009      Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) welcomed the news that the UNESCO executive board has rejected the candidacy of Egyptian Culture Minister Farouk Hosni to be the organization's director general.

"The outcome today clearly demonstrates that USCIRF's concerns about the Egyptian Cultural Minister's suitability for the top job at UNESCO were shared by UNESCO member states," said USCIRF chair Leonard Leo. "It is important to have a Director General who supports the values of UNESCO."

As USCIRF pointed out in a September 11, 2009 letter to Secretary of State Clinton, Mr. Hosni has made public remarks and advocated and carried out policies that are inconsistent with the leadership of an organization dedicated to promoting international educational, scientific and cultural collaboration. He also has served for 22 years as a Minister in a government that perpetrates and tolerates serious human rights violations against its own citizens, including widespread abuses of the religious freedom of both members of religious minorities and non-conforming Muslims.

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and the leadership of both political parties in the Senate and the House of Representatives. USCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress.

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